



The cover for the beloved Death Valley Driver #126 is from the magic imagination of Euro-Comix master/wrestler, young Linus. He is truly 1979 Byrne-esque in this go round and you rejoice.

DEVIL MASAMI! is suddenly the World's Greatest Grandma! SHIRLEY DOE! SUPER HENTAI! and ORION! try to find new ways to die! BRUSIER BRODY! Moos like a COW?!?!?! ABBY! and ONE MAN GANG! rip it up?!?!?! Plus AJA! BEAUTIFUL BOBBY ! LOVERBOY DENNIS! and whatever else would could write about when not distracted by MARCH MADNESS!

Hiya

Welcome to the Death Valley Driver Video Review

We were going to go into total overkill this time around but then the Super 8 came around and we got all the tapes in the world, so the FOCUS- the FOCUS was gone and we just sat around for three weeks watching hours upon hours of tape of the pro wrestling and BOY! there is loads of good wrestling this year. #127 will be giant catch up. This will be the beauty of #126- a normalish batch of DVDVRicana, which means plenty from the LAAADDIIIESSS, US Indies (including the Pittsburgh tape that was two years in the making), a Rippa intensive Singles Going Steady and Phat Tony. So let us start this party off with Mr. Schneider.

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@!@!@!@! The Pittsburgh Tape

(by Phil Schneider)

Orion vs. Super Hentai - Tables and Chairs Match (2/9/2000)

Probably the most fun match on this tape, and a really nasty brawl, this was the rubber match of a three match series - a winner must hit a top rope move, a barbwire spidernet death match (which Orion just gets skewered) and this Tables and Chairs match. The first two matches were pretty good, but this one sets a precedent. Hentai is a smallish highflyer, with a Sasuke mask and a less flourishy Blitzkrieg offense. Orion is like the world's best Sean O'Haire, a big guy about 6'3 240 who does some really great highspots, and takes a goodly beating - his punches in this match are kind of O'Haireish though. It starts pretty swank as they toss chairs at each other, with Hentai just smacking Orion with a hurled chair. Super stiff chair, table and ladder shots are a thematic strain through this tape, and I worry about the vegetabilization these guys are doing to themselves. Hentai then knocks Orion to the outside and places a sign around his neck with a target drawn on it (this is a sign of where he is going to land his highspot and is one of my favorite indy scum spots ever). He then badly blows an moonsault to the floor off of a chair, and gets whacked with a chair for his troubles. My favorite spot of the match had Orion set up a pair of chairs in three corners. He then attempts to powerbomb Hentai through them (it is the same bump that Terry Funk is always taking), Hentai rolls through the first attempt but Orion catches him on a springboard rana attempt and smashes him through three sets of chair, one in each corner. You have to love actual psychology in your garbage brawls. The ref gets bumped and Shirley Doe (DVDVR messageboard poster and Ken the Box T-Shirt artist Sam Panico) comes out and knocks all the geography out of Hentai's head with a chair shot. Orion puts him on a table and hits a swanton bomb from the top rope to the floor through the table for the win. They dust the finish though as the second ref restarts the match (a lot of these matches are overbooked, I think Dutch Mantel must sideline booking Pittsburgh.) They restart the match and they do a super cool spot, where Hentai does a plancha and Orion throws a chair at him, Hentai catches it in mid-air and whips it back into Orion's head removing all of Orion's memories of middle school. He then grabs a two sets of three attached chairs and the match got all surreal. He places a folded table on top of the chairs so it is suspended above the floor, and an aggrieved girl snatches her sweater before it gets covered with wood splinters and blood. Hentai throws Orion on top of the table and he climbs to the balcony and dives off with a swanton bomb, smacking right into Orion, but not even bending the table. Since you have to put the guy through a table to win, Hentai heads up to the balcony again and hits a superfly splash, still not denting the table, which they must have imported from the Mid-South Coliseum. Hentai goes up

for a third balcony dive, still no effect on the table, but Orion don't look so good, at this point one of the guys in the balcony has abandoned the match and is reading a comic book. Then in one of the nastiest spots I have seen in a while, Hentai goes to the top rope and hits a double kneedrop right to the chest of Orion, undoubtedly turning his ribs into Grape Nuts, still no movement from the table. Finally Hentai goes up for the fourth balcony dive of the match this time the table sort of splinters, and they call an end to the match, before they have to pick Orion up with a spatula. This match was a batch of fun, the sweater, the target sign, the comic book, the slapstick finish, good stuff, and these kids aren't afraid to mix some wrestling into the brutality.

Shirley Doe/Super Mantaii/Devil Bhudokhan vs. Super Hentai/Dirk Cigler (9/8/2000)

This was a lucharific handicap elimination match, with Doe's Hellfire Club rudo stable against the highflying technicos. This was a pretty fun match with Hentai leading the way, as this kind of match really plays to his strengths, he hits two really beautiful moves, a spinning rollup into a La Magistral and a great quick northern-lights suplex. I first broke this tape out as a prelude to Ganc-tomk-Phil Schneider trio of terror night in D.C., and this is the first Shirley Doe match on there. His first participation in the match is to work a lucha sequence with Hentai and he looks pretty crappy, including possibly the worst monkey flip I have ever seen. To quote the Ganc, it looked like "Oliver Humperdink attempting a sunset filp." This bummed us out because Sam is a nice guy and a good artist and all, and it looked like he was a shitty wrestler, and it was kind of like listening to your friends band, as they are all excited about it, and it just sounds like a third rate Black Crowes. Luckily, Sam had some really good matches later on the tape, and completely redeemed himself, but it was dicey there for a minute. Overall the match was good, although Cigler, Mantaii and Devil didn't do much to stand out.

Super Hentai vs. Brandon K (9/30/2000)

Completely different match then the previous two, this was very counter wrestling intensive, and they definitely took there inspiration from the Malenko vs. Guerrero series. Although like those matches, this delved a little too much into the realm of interpretive dance, although Hentai did bring a nice stiff uppercut to pump up the actual violence. Some of the counters were really pretty, including the finish which was a counter of a twisting roll up, which had gotten a two count moments earlier. No dives or really big spots in this match, which Hentai wasn't afraid to break out in previous bouts. I think that would have pushed this match to the next level, the work was stellar, but it need some more explosion to put in the top echelon of indy matches. I definitely think these two have it in them though, and I would like to see the rematch. After the match the Hellfire Club runs in and Devil does a top rope tombstone through a table, which was sure nasty looking and the kind of thing (sans prop) that I would have like to see the finish of the match lead up to.

Super Hentai/Devil Bhudokhan vs. Orion/Scott Venom - Ladder Match (10/21/2000)

Not what one would call a "good match" but it was quite the batch of really crazy painful spots, my favorite was Devil doing a top of the ladder splash on to the floor, which must have just killed his knees. Orion was looney doing a ladder leapfrog frog splash, and a swanton off the ladder. Hentai does a nutso planch off the ladder to the floor. They also just killed each other with the

ladder, smashing it into each others head and dropping it directly on each others crotches. The ending was terrible and they blew a bunch of stuff but it did have a bunch of cringy spots.

Orion vs. Shirley Doe - Texas Death Match (11/22/2000)

This was the best match on here overall. Sam redeems himself for his monkey flip by putting on a super old school nicely paced brawl. Unlike most matches heavy in props, this had a balanced pacing which the Death Match stip helped a lot. The falls would allow the crowd to settle a little bit and then they would build up the intensity with stiff shots and big moves. Doe busts Orion open early and gives a bunch of nasty short punches to open up the wounds. He gets the first fall, by slapping on a sweet rolling Regal stretch, and pressing out Orion's head which creates the best visual I think I have ever seen on a HH tape, blood streaming down Orion's face and he is tied in knots screaming in pain. I think what I liked about this match so much, was that the stiffness wasn't just in the weapons shots, someone taught Orion how to punch in the course of this tape, and all the actual strikes were really stiff and it brought out the intensity of the match. I could have done without the superfluous valet shit, and I thought the ending, with both guys getting up, but the ref seeing Orion down again after he suplexed Doe's valet, was too gimmicky for this match. Otherwise I got no complaints, had the feel of the kind of Texas Death match you would see in the Carolinas with the more modern stuff (dives, swanton off a ladder through a table) being more of a seasoning then the focus of the match

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~!~!~!~ ARSION : ARS 2000

(Rev Ray Duffy)

This is actually 2 sets of shows, the second being the ARS 2000 tournament. The tape opens with the VIP girls coming out and doing some poses. I think this was billed as a VIP presents show as they have their logo on the mic.

Mari Apache/Fabbi Apache vs. Linda Starr/Apache

Apache initially doesn't want to go up against his "daughters" (I say "daughters" because I'm not sure if they really are or if it's one of those Debbie Malenko type "trained by daughters" deals, I've heard both, so I dunno), but when the referee says "Papa" and points in to the ring, he decides to start off. He does some flying around lucha flying around gymnastic type stuff and posing before dropping one with a chop to the head. He he gets some heat from the crowd, he just sort of shrugs it off like "Hey! what am I supposed to do!" He knocks off the other Apache from the apron when teasing a plancha, setting up a back drop into a dive of Linda to the Apaches on the floor. Linda Starr looked pretty ok when she was in; hitting some ok stuff. The finish comes when Linda goes for a rana on I think Mari (the one with Love of her boots), but gets powered up and Lygerbombed. Fabbi runs in and drop kicks an unsuspecting Apache off the apron and hits a quebrada to the floor as Mari hits a top rope leg drop for the win.

AKINO/Ayako Hamada/Mariko Yoshida vs. Yumi Fukawa/Michiko Omukai/Miss X

The VIP girls have their partner do a little dance number pose prior to the match start which AKINO and Hamada sort of goof on while sitting up on the corner buckle. Miss X comes out and unmask to reveal Xoichi Hamada, Ayako's older and not as hot sister. AKINO starts out

with a slap on Omukai and then after getting an evil glance from Omukai , gives her a comedy lighter slap, then another which leads to the fighting. AKINO hits a Ohtani style booksrape in the corner on Omukai, but Michiko gets revenge by giving her a corner boot choke in the corner that has AKINO's feet dangling off the mat. Xiochi gets a tag in against Ayako, but after a tie up and push to the ropes, but Xiochi won't fight her sister at first, but later in the match, she hits her with a headbutt from the apron putting her back in the match. They get in a plancha spot to the floor with everyone. Fukawa's and Yoshida's segments are a bunch of the usual awesome mat spots you expect from Yoshida early on before she busts out some powerbombs and suplexes. Ayako and AKINO try to set up a lift spot onto Omukai in the corner, but Omukai counters with a boot to the face. In the end, Omukai blocks off some double team attempts by Ayako and AKINO and puts away AKINO with a BT Bomb. Post match, Omukai talks some smack about Ayako and stuff and they seem to want Xoichi to join in on it, but Xoichi decides she doesn't want any part of it and shakes her sister's hand, resulting in a post match scuffle between the parties.

Aja Kong vs. Etsuko Mita

I'm not certain, but this might be a lumberjill match as it seems there are people at ringside and they toss both women into the ring in various clips, including Mita getting tossed back in the ring as Aja teases a dive. Mita does a bunch of submission type stuff early in the match. Aja fights back later in the match hitting a near fall with a brain buster, but gets caught when she goes up for the falling elbow in an electric chair suplex by Mita. Mita has a blazing chop attempt blocked with a kick and eats an uraken. Aja goes for her old top rope mountainbomb finish, but Mita sort of falls out of it in a rough looking spot and in turn hits her Death Valley Bomb for two. A later attempt leads to Aja catching her in a cradle/rings of saturn into a cross armbreaker attempt for a near fall. Eventually, Mita runs into an uraken and gets pinned. There was a funny part at the start where Aja's cutting a promo and calls Apache "Papa" and rips the VIP logo off the microphone.

ARS 2000 tournament : First Round

Yumi Fukawa vs. Rie Tamada

Former partners face off as it's VIP v. ReDrag. Tamada is sporting her Stephanie McMahon Evil Perm and hits a tornado DDT on the floor by hopping onto the apron. Rie works on Fukawa's knee at one point, but doesn't seem to stick with it as her offense is just sort of all over the place. Fukawa works on Tamada's arm with a few cross arm breaker attempts. Tamada sells the damage well as with her arm hurting, it prevents her from keeping a bridge on a dragon suplex attempt. Fukawa's persistence of working on the arm pays off as she eventually gets the tap on the cross armbreaker as Tamada tries to fight her way out of it a few times, but couldn't get out. Not bad.

GAMI vs. Bionic J

This is a bit clipped, GAMI hits a stunner at one point and the classic Moe eye poke into a small package. J hit a nice chokeslam/powerbomb type move after catching GAMI on the top rope. GAMI eventually puts her away with a shotay for the pin. Eh, it was clipped, so I can't really tell if anything was seriously blown on J's part, she looked OK in the match.

Xoichi Hamada vs. Etsuko Mita

This was 5 minutes long and it was clipped a bit... uh, it wasn't very good. Mita hits the Death Valley Bomb for the win.

Mariko Yoshida vs. Mima Shimoda

Yoshida works on Mima's leg for the early part of the match. Mima hits a really bad looking ax kick for a near fall at one point. Yoshida works on the arm a bit which Mima doesn't really seem to sell much. Mima gets a near fall with a tiger suplex. Shimoda hits another near fall with a Death Lake Driver and her somersault ax kick thing. She teases the Air Raid Crash on Yoshida, but Yoshida counters and hits one of her own for 2. Yoshida eventually makes Shimoda tap to her Sleeper with neck submission hold. Eh, the more I watch of Shimoda the less and less I like her. At one point my theory was that her work as a garbage wrestler was lousy because she's just not a good garbage wrestler, but this was a straight wrestling match and there's was just a lot lacking in her offense including her chops and strikes which didn't look that good.

QuarterFinals

Yumi Fukawa vs. Michiko Omukai

Fukawa attempts to keep her bigger partner on the mat and off her feet as she gives her a few knee bars early on and catches her in a few armbreaker spots. Omukai tries to power her way out of a triangle lock by picking up Fukawa and dropping her, but that doesn't work. Omukai eventually gets to her feet and throws around Yumi with three uranages. Yumi flips out of a BT bomb attempt and hits a cross armbreaker which Omukai briefly turns into a cradle before Yumi gets out. In sort of a neat counter, Yumi is going for the racked leg lock, Omukai uses her long legs to turn it into a sort of armbreaker spot before Yumi fights out back into her leg lock. Omukai kicks Yumi in the head twice with roundhouse kicks which has the ref stopping the match temporarily to check on Yumi. Yumi fights her way back up and counters a jumping back kick attempt into a kneebar before Omukai escapes and hits the Tiger Suplex for the win. This was fun, but given what I know about the fact Yumi is retiring due to a head injury, the brief stoppage was kind of scary.

GAMI vs. Aja Kong

Aja rushes at the bell and puts GAMI down with a back fist which GAMI sells like she's dead, with the ref checking on her, before GAMI hops up as Aja yells at her and hits a lariat. GAMI ducks an uraken attempt and hits a shotay but pulls up Aja at two to hit her with a brainbuster after sitting her on the ropes. They do a segment where they duck each other's stuff before GAMI hits an uraken for a near fall. Aja eventually puts GAMI up top and hits her mountain bomb move for the win in three minutes. Way to short, Aja seemed to be holding her ear after the Uraken, so maybe they went home early.

Semi Finals

Michiko Omukai vs. Etsuko Mita

This gets a bit clipified. They do a neat spot Mita goes for a Death Valley Bomb, but Omukai turns it into a double arm bar type move. This only goes five minutes though. Omukai's kicks,

that are shown, look good but it seems like she blows a powerbomb attempt near the end of the match before getting the win with the BT Bomb. Post match she and Mita shake hands and Mita baps her on the head with a slap.

Aja Kong vs. Mariko Yoshida

This starts out with a bunch of mat spots, we get a clip. It seems a lot of the stuff is offense coming out of counters to counters. Yoshida hits a German for a near fall. Aja reverses an Air Raid Crash into a powerbomb onto the buckles. Yoshida gets Aja in trouble with her tripped out sleeper/neck submission move once, then gets her in the Teioh lock. An Air Raid Crash gets her a two count and the sleeper hold is back on. Aja powers out of it and gets a near fall with an uraken. Yoshida gets a near fall on a high kick, but eventually runs into an uraken. Not as good as I hoped it would be. The clipification and pace sort of hurt it.

Mari Apache/Linda Starr/Ayako Hamada vs. Ai Fujita/AKINO/Candy Okutsu

Early on Ayako controls for the most part on Ai, with her team getting in some corner drop kicks on Fujita before Ai either hits a low drop kick or does an ode to Erik Watts. Ayako gets beat up in a corner by the other team and gets a drop kick by AKINO, a handspring elbow by Fujita and a clothesline by Candy. They do a cute spot where the mostly CAZAI team takes turns running the ropes and stepping on Ayako's stomach as they run to the ropes and then bounce off and tag in their partner. Linda gets in some offense with a top rope drop kick and a giant swing. Ayako takes too long (we're talking Scotty 2 Hotty Worm level long) to set up her quebrada to the floor which results in Ai and Candy getting away and her landing on Mari. CAZAI set up and hit Mari with a triple diving headbutt after a dive sequence. During a near finish segment with Mari on Fujita, Starr blocks AKINO by putting her in a semi version of the Tarantula. Ai plays victim to near falls but escapes a Super Splash Mountain by Mari by hitting a rana. The end comes when Ai hits Mari with the 450 for the win. This was a fun little match. Starr again looked pretty good in the stuff I saw of her. I am really impressed with what I've seen of AKINO, her stuff seems pretty sharp when she does it and you can see she's got personality, so as long as she stays healthy, she's got a pretty good future. Ai looked pretty good for a quasi first impression of her. Mari's stuff was ok, but they seemed to have saved her to do her big stuff towards the end of the match and Candy was just sort of there to do some spots.

Finals

Michiko Omukai vs. Aja Kong

Omukai's wearing a black outfit that looks like it belonged to Takako Inoue, but she left it in the dryer and it shrank, so she had to give it to Omukai. Not that there's anything wrong with that.. We open up with some kick attempts on both's part. Aja misses an uraken and gets dropped by one by Omukai. Aja eventually gets in control and starts dishing out back suplexes and brainbusters but can't get the pin. Omukai ducks three uraken attempts before being backed into the corner. She ends up flipping out of Aja's super mountain bomb and hitting a BT bomb for a near fall. Omukai tries to set up a Super BT Bomb, but Aja elbows her off and hits the falling elbow for two. The exchange some punches with some ducks to avoid eating some punches. Aja ends up winning with the uraken. Eh.. real short, 6 minutes. Just sort of there,

nothing horrible, aside from the imagine of the whisper thin Omukai trying to muscle Aja up onto the top rope. Aja wins the ARS 2000 tournament.

Post match, they have the trophy ceremony. There's funny moment when they mention an award for I'm guessing either 3rd place or Miss Congeniality as GAMI wins it and lets out a funny laugh as she rushes the ring to get her award.

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GAEA G-PANIC!- GAORA TV- 10/2000
(DEAN RASMUSSEN)

This is the G-Panic! that followed the overly perfunctory and big-but-uninspiring DOUBLE DESTINY where all the youngsters went over. Joshi Dorkdom Assembled whined about this show undoing all the good that Double Destiny show did- which is hilarious when you think that Double Destiny is the biggest show of the year in terms of attention showed to Joshi; Chigusa put every youngster over because she now wants every youngster and every veteran on an equal footing. She's got that now- what with her being the best booker in wrestling. The booking of this period creates the fucking great matches that permeate the latest batch of GAEA so the long range development of every position of the roster is seamlessly grown into this wrestling juggernaut and it is my favorite promotion currently.

Toshie Uematsu vs Toshiyo Yamada:

Yamada has been instrumental in transforming Uematsu from a failed injured high-flier to her current incarnation of fiesty little ass-kicker and thus has salvaged Uematsu's at one point teetering career because of it. This is also the feud that got the Punch In The Face over as a finisher for everyone else in GAEA- so Chigusa gets holistic production from all aspects of the card. This was 1:27 and sucked.

Mayumi Ozaki vs Chikayo Nagashima:

I'm assuming this is a High Spurt Tournament as Oz starts off with a Northern Lights Bomb and Chikayo starts with a Northern Lights Bomb and they just kill each other for the first two minutes. Then Oz no-sells a urican and hits a Tequila Sunrise Suplex for the win. This sucked also.

KAORU vs. Sugar Sato:

This is my favorite feud of the last twelve months and this match up is usually the funnest. Sugar Tenru Kicks KAORU in the face for a while until KAORU hits a sweet Rana for the transition. She tries it again and Sugar turns it into a Powerbomb for the win. This wasn't long and wasn't good.

Chigusa Nagayo vs. Dynamite Kansai:

Chigusa is on this weird good match streak and it looks like Kansai is finally back into fighting form- as this match is better than it should ever be. Chigusa goes for submissions while Kansai gets into full Kansai Kick You Right In The Motherfucking Face mode and I'm in love with being

in love yet still again. Kansai hauls out all her big powermoves and Chigusa is up for the task of bumping to make it all look good- as Kansai's Lyger Bomb looks great and Chigusa takes Kansai's gnarly Backdrop Driver like a champ. The ending is kinda botched when Chigusa and Kansai take a while to get Chigusa into position for Kansai's Niagra Driver. Chigusa's Triangle Hold out of the Kansai Driver is the finish- as memories of the stylings of Yamazaki reach deep into the Japanese Wrestling psyche.

Meiko Satomura vs. Devil Masami:

I STILL can't figure out what happened to Devil Masami. She looked thoroughly washed up 5 years ago. Hell, I thought she sucked in the 1980s All Japan Women tapes I have. For some reason, this year in GAEA, she has become a wrestling machine- a distaff Tenryu of the geriatric set. I think Chigusa sat her down and said, "You are my idol and my best friend but you've GOT to start selling more." I think that's the key, because this match would have sucked at any other point in her career, but fucking rules it now. The key to this little match is that it isn't Super Hell Devil Masami or listless and normal Devil Masami but Devil Masami the aging legend- a legend who can be beaten by the young crop of stars that GAEA has created. And that is why her matches are compelling now. Here, she is assaulted by Satomura's high powered offense and takes five Death Valley Drivers in all. As she reels under the onslaught, she fights and gets in a stiff as all hell Lariat here and a nasty Jumping Powerbomb there- but the key to the match is Devil's selling- her surprise and FEAR of losing to the youngster again, the pathos as she struggles to her feet. In this series of matches-as-sprints, Satomura goes for the killing Death Valley Driver after crushing Devil with two in succession. A desperate Devil does a picture perfect roll-up out of a crucifix before Satomura can get her in position for the final Death Valley Driver and Devil gets the flash pin. The look of relief by Devil in victory gets over to the viewer the full onslaught by Meiko and Meiko plays the craftiness of the veteran angle by taking the flash pin with suitable mirth. This was probably the best Nitro match in the history of GAEA- as Devil vs Meiko is as magical and far more surprising than Aja vs Meiko. Psychology and storytelling- it makes GAEA the best promotion in the world even when they have throwaway matches like these.

Aja Kong vs. Lionness Aska:

Hey! Aja Kong is the best wrestler in the world. Here, she is wrestling Lionness Aska, the best wrestler in the world. Doing the math should lead one to think that this would be- of course- the best match in the world. Well, this is too short to be that, but it is really great while it lasts. It's joined in progress, as Aja misses a toprope elbow to get Lionness launching full into Tableland, hitting her highly contrived but really great looking double stomp off the top turnbuckle to the floor. Lionness then hits the Iconoclasm on Aja- which looks pretty impressive what with all the gargantuan weight and girth involved. Aja kicks out of a Towerhacker Powerbomb attempt and hits a fabulous Brainbuster which leads into the gnarliest spot from 2001 yet- the Aja Kong Urican to the THROAT of Lionness. For two. Aja sits Lionness on the toprope and they punch each other in the face to get position. Lionness tries to Sunset Flip into a powerbomb but Lionness doesn't get clearance and takes full brunt of Aja landing full-on right on her head- in what I'm guessing was the hurtiest looking blown spot since Stan Hansen crushed the ribcage of Kenta Kobashi in 1998 after losing his footing on the toprope. A couple of submission

attempts later and the ten minute time limit is up. So I guess this IS a High Spurt Tourney. That would explain it. Doesn't make it any less irritating. I await a real match between these two, as the stiffness and ass-beating HINTED at in this points to something phenomenal.

Akira Hokuto vs. Sonoko Kato:

Akira Hokuto is back in wrestling shape and that's good to see- since she brings everything I like in wrestling to the table. 1:01. I give you....Suck.

Meiko Satomura vs. Saika Takeuchi:

Hey! Takeuchi's first good match is against her future rival- Meiko Satomura and the push to the top for young Takeuchi is going faster than one would suspect since the number one youngster in the promotion gives her tons of offense- including a neat Buff Blockbuster that Sonoko Kato must have donated to her. Saika is all kicky and shooty and Meiko is all submissions and armbars as Saika tries to work for her finisher- the Tiger Suplex Hold. Meiko somersault kicks her in the face but Saika successfully fights out of the Death Valley Driver. Meiko goes all Tully on her ass, raking her eyes across the top rope, but Saika fights off of the top corner turnbuckle and hits a Tiger for two. After Meiko reverses out of her attempt at a key lock, Meiko sinks in the Cross-Armbreaker and it's all over. Takeuchi is gonna be a good one. This is a good little match.

Hirota vs. Sonoko Kato:

She's dressed like Sonoko with really big thighs. It's funny!

HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA! BOY! This match doesn't end....

Chigusa Nagayo/Toshie Uematsu vs. Akira Hokuto/Toshiyo Hamada:

I contend that while it is true that the five best matches in the history of GAIA were probably singles matches, the bread and butter of GAIA is that they have great great great tag matches like Michinoku Pro used to have great 6 and 8 man matches- slightly indistinguishable but at such a very high level that it's like trying to pick your favorite Buzzcocks song or something. Akira and Toshiyo with the help of Lesbian Policeman maul Chigusa early. Toshie makes with the plancha to kick the match into gear. Yamada- God bless her- will STILL kick ya right in the motherfucking face just to see that look in your eyes- and Uematsu REALLY takes one for the team after hitting a nice Wristlock Suplex into a Comical Lucha Submission. Akira Hokuto cheats like a motherfucker to allow Yamada and LPM to beat the crap out of Chigusa's arm. Chigusa gets the first transition by winning a Duelling Jumping Spin Kick and tags in Uematsu- who is beaten to a pulp by the wildly resurgent DANGEROUS QUEEN- who is just blowing the roof off the Bitchometer these days. Yamada does one those BEAUTIFUL and acrobatic half-ring flying full-extension kicks to the face- a perfect melding of ballet and hatred- and Toshie takes it like a QUEEN. Akira Hokuto kills Chigusa on the mat and they finally reverse out of a kneebar into an STF into a Sleeper into a save by Yamada. Chigusa goes back on offense by rolling into a modified kneebar. Chigusa tries for a Death Valley Driver but Hokuto reverses it into a Strangle Hold Gamma. Toshie Uematsu makes the save and Chigusa DVDs both to set up Uematsu's Second rope dropkick into two Double Wristlock Suplexes for a nearfall. Yamada is the weak link as Toshie keeps going for two-counts until Uematsu misses a big Punch To The

Face that Yamada counters with a REALLY Big Punch To The Face. Toshie escapes and they go to this finish where Chigusa is Superplexing Akira and she ends up landing on Yamada who has just been kicked in the shoulder by Toshie Uematsu. Chigusa then lariats Akira into Lesbian Policeman and Toshie Uematsu gets the pin on Yamada with a Dragon Suplex. Postmatch, Lesbian Policeman is a fucking HEAT MACHINE as she hides behind Akira Hokuto to taunt Chigusa. The crowd is molten as Chigusa does every face trick to lure the heel into the ring. Knowing Chigusa's love of gimmick matches, I see a Five Minutes With The Policeman match on the horizon. Fabulous match though. Yamada is so good in her role as ass-kicker and she can still do a flying kick every now and then to remind you of how great she was before her body broke down. Her and Uematsu in the ring is compelling as you see Yamada try to instill what was great in Yamada's style into her protege. Uematsu will never be as graceful in her ass-kicking as Yamada was, but she could definately assume the role of Toughest Vixen In GAEA like Yamada was the Toughest Vixen In AJW way back in the day- hangin with the stiffness of Hotta way back when.

Mayumi Ozaki/Devil Masami vs. Chikayo Nagashima/ Sugar Sato:

MAAAAAAN! This match fucking RULES. Ya'll know the backstory of Sugar and Chikayo turning on GAEA to go with OZ and then the shocking turn on OZ two years later. They play up the hate and the fun ensues. Through Devil Masami wrestling IN THE ZONE as of late and you have a match that kicks as much ass as this one. The first few minutes is Mayumi Ozaki slapping around her former charges that she tops off with her powerbombing Chikayo into the turnbuckle. Devil comes in and crushes Chikayo's skull with a Fujiwara headbutt but Chikayo takes out her knee when Devil goes for a lariat. Chikayo goes to the top rope but Devil catches her. Chikayo grabs her arm and gets Devil in a tricked-out Triangle Hold- as Devil is draped over the top rope with Chikayo stretched out to the outside of the ring with her shoulders on the apron- a sort of modified Tarantula. Devil counters by Mayumi Ozaki dropkicking Chikayo in the face as she is upside down- in what was one my favorite spots of the year so far. Sugar hoists Devil all the way over the top rope and the fight hits the floor. Sugar goes straight to the "West" sign again and the brawling isn't as brilliant as it should be with Sugar and Oz being RIGHT there. They drag Chikayo into the ring and Devil goes hogwild with the powermoves. Chikayo fights out of a powerbomb and Devil does a good Fuerza Guerrera impersonation as Chikayo does a Rana into a roll-up for two. Sugar comes in and gets hit with a big Lariat by Devil but catches Devil with the help of Chikayo as Devil is on the top rope. Devil- who for some reason will bump like a motherfucking FREAK these days- takes a Toprope Superplex from Sugar. Sugar misses the Toprope Tenryu Elbow and Devil hits a Jumping Powerbomb for two. Oz comes in and Sugar kills her with a Tenryu straight Kick To The Face. Sugar hits her swanky Rotation Powerbomb but has to tag out. Oz fights out a Northern Lights Bomb but succumbs to a Cross Armbreaker as she tries a Urican. Devil kills Chikayo with a legdrop for the save. Chikayo and Oz trade Northern Lights Bombs until OZ turns one into a NASTY looking DDT. They go into nearfall-save mode until Devil gets backdropped to the floor by Sugar. Chikayo kicks out of a Oz Running Powerbomb after Oz survives a Northern Lights Bomb. Chikayo fights out of the finishing Running Powerbomb and as she is about to roll her up, Sugar punches OZ right in the face while at a sprint and Chikayo rolls Oz up to get the pin. This match FUCKING RULES. Chikayo is all over this in the inventive spots that lead to weird reversals

and into a really cool nearfalls. Devil is fucking baffling in her sudden goodness. Oz is heading back to the Best In The World designation with matches like this. I dunno. I just also REALLY love that the major catalyst in most GAEA matches is who can throw the best looking punch to the face. This is SOOOOOO much what I fucking love in wrestling. Postmatch is fucking great as the punx talk shit and the Bridge Ladies get their bloomers in a wad. GAEA fucking rules the whole goddamn world.

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!@!@!@!@!@ THE HEROES OF WRESTLING PAY-PER-VIEW- 10/10/1999- CASINO
MAGIC- MISSISSIPPI (PART ONE)
(DEAN RASMUSSEN)

CRZ sent me this as sort of a dare- as I am taking a little trip to wrestling horror as I you may recall that I supped deep the stinky crappy Bandits and Bodyguards- which turned out to not suck nearly as much dick as I was led to believe. Hope springs eternal again with this- the hideous, unwanted PPV of the late 90s. Young Christopher wanted to keep me on the hideous roll of PPV anathema so he sent me this backed up with hours upon hours of New Zoo Revue- a childrens show from the late 60s, early 70s that featured Emmyjo- a mini-beskirtd instructional supervixen that would have a big influence on what would summon the wood for the rest of my life. For some reason, in Sunnyvale, California, they show hour upon hour of it every morning- as California is dichotomy of wonderful vintage children's programming grouped with rolling blackouts and mudslides. A bittersweet geographical conundrum indeed.

I fast forwarded through all THE PROMOS~! and listened to all the stoner rock I've downloaded this week, so it's all about WORKRATE WORKRATE WORKRATE! YEAH, DADDY!

Samoan Swat Team vs. Marty Janetty/Tommy Rogers: The Samoan Swat Team were really good workers back in the late 80s in NWA if I remember my Monday nights at Kip Dawkins house back in the day when we would watch all the weeks wrestling while fast forwarded through the nine Alka-Seltzer commercials that permeated WCW Saturday Night in the time of yore. Jannetty is still a decent worker and Tommy Rogers is STILL a fucking GREAT worker so I have high hopes. First thing you notice is that the SST are a lot fatter now than in 1989, but- FUCK!- Sweet Jiminy Crap knows that I'm a lot fatter too- so this is becoming like a empathetic thing with me. Are the SST a shell of themselves like I am a shell of my self, or are they intrinsically good like I am intrisically good? Are they wilier in their Gone To Seed late thirties? Did they learn anything or are they just holding onto memories? Well, lucky for them they have the advantage of having Tommy Motherfucking Rogers bumping all over the ring for them. I personally have so many Tommy Rogerses in my life covering for my old fat ass that I shouldn't say anything about the poor fat SST. Actually, lets say this- the SST were too fat to not blowup but they did make it a watchable match as they only OBVIOUSLY too fat to bump a couple of times. They kept this short to avoid Efibulation Driver '91. Janetty bumped his ass off to make this work. Rogers is wasted as merely the guy who finds out that we fat Polynesians have really hard heads. And we all have huge penises too. Didn't know that one,did ya? Yep. We all gotta reg-lar hogleg.

They have this disturbing series of vignettes where George the Animal Steele is sniffing around Sherri Martel. I try to figure out if Steele's or Martel's mounting face would be more deeply psychologically scarring.

Greg Valentine vs. George Steele: The Hammer goes waaaaay back in my wrestling fandom. I remember his first year in Mid-Atlantic when Number One Paul Jones (the eternal crowd favorite before donning the red Vegas outfit and managing mediocre stables) called him "Babyfat" Valentine to the fans' delight. I remember he and Flair being eternal Mid-Atlantic tagteam champions. His style was important in shaping my appreciation of stiffness and making everything look legit. He never exposed anything when I saw him live as a kid, so I have good memories of the Hammer and hated the fuck out of Vince McMahon when he ended up making him half of Rhythm and Blues. It was sacrilege and fuck Vince for doing it. Hell, I remember the motherfucking great Johnny Valentine before the plane crash. Watching Johnny Valentine go 20 minutes George Toot Ton Harris on TV was a joy, I can't imagine how good he was in the 60s. FLASH! Steele lays in the corner with his shirt over his head as Sherri turns on him. Valentine kicks him lightly for a while then Steele gets up and IT'S ON! Valentine starts jabbing him with a spoon as they show DISTURBING close-ups of Greg's cottage cheese-packed thighs as they show it being hidden in his tights. After a few minutes of pooptacular nothing by either, Sherri hits Steele in the back with a chair and Valentine gets the win. Steele throws Martel over the top rope to remind you that Martel was a one-time great bumpfreak who was stuck in the stupid USA in her prime. This definitely sucked as much as the hype said it would.

Julio Fantastico vs. Too Cold Scorpio: Fantastico is underwhelming any time I've ever seen him- and this match was WELL after the two year flirt with greatness that Scorpio had carrying every motherfucker in ECW, as well as into the gigantic slump he had after getting lethargic in the WWF. This is gut-wrenchingly horrible. They did a really good job of not showing up Nikolai Volkoff, George Steele or King Kong Bundy's match as they keep it lowgrade and basic. They AAA the highspot and nothing in the ring is going very well. Scorp tries to settle him down and tries to get into the right position for Fantastico- who tries to acquit himself by bumping like a freak and he does hit big a few times. I dunno. The whole thing was clunky and half-assed. This was a lot like that PPV match between Doug Furnas and Masato Tanaka- though I thought Fantastico and Scorp spoke the same language so they are all out of excuses. Scorp goes way long on the Tumbleweed and luckily- for young Julio- doesn't land anywhere near his head. They show a replay of the missed finisher for some reason. This would be the second best match so far.

Iron Sheik/Nikolai Volkoff vs. Bushwhackers: Ah yes, the four oldest farts on the PPV. The Bushwhackers used to be great as the evil and blood-drenched Shepherders in the UWF. They were in the first barbed-wire match I ever saw and they were sincerely hardcore and evil. Nikolai Volkoff was Gedo Mongol and was scary when I was a kid when he was managed by laff-riot Professor Boris Malenko. Iron Sheik had a good match against Bob Backlund for the WWWF title that I saw and he did some cool suplexes a long time ago. This was horrible. You'd think with 120 years of combined ring experience, you'd come up with something better

than this. God, lose the horrendously shitty clotheslines (Volkoff was trying to protect from tearing his bicep, I guess) and whip out the blade you old fux. This is possibly the shittiest display of wrestling ever taped. Volkoff should have shot up some more embalming fluid before the match started. (Jiminy fucking Christmas. I need a break from this shit.

“A Flair For the Gold: the Selling of the New South and Professional Wrestling” (by Anthony Gancarski)

Given the exposures of democracy inherent in the local manipulation of the Presidential Selection process, it is perhaps fitting that dying wrestling promotion WCW brings its Greed Pay Per View to the Jacksonville Coliseum on Sunday, March 18th. WCW, like our local NFL franchise, dedicated too much money to too many employees, and is on the brink of shutdown if circumstances don't change drastically. Of course, the Jaguars' chokehold on the public teat ensures their existence for the foreseeable future, but on more points than not WCW Greed coming here is infused with an ineluctable irony.

Like Jacksonville, wrestling isn't what it used to be. Wrestling now puts the faces in FUBU gear, and the heels in Brooks Brothers togs. Women wrestle men now, and the spectacle – no one in the mainstream media makes a consistent case for athleticism among WCW or WWF workers – unapologetically markets myriad transgressions to the American people. Wrestling no longer involves Gordon Solie bemoaning the donning of the crimson mask, or stars working credible back-and-forth squashes with enhancement talent. Instead, the “sports entertainment” field markets catchphrases, action figures, and innuendo to young and younger alike. It didn't used to be like that. Not in Florida.

Once upon a time, in the 1970s and 1980s, our state was the homeplace of Championship Wrestling from Florida. Hosted by the laconic Gordon Solie, the program, was noted among serious wrestling fans for realistic in-ring action, compelling storylines, and a focus on athleticism. Wrestlers like Dory Funk Jr. and Jack Brisco worked “broadway”, time-limit draws throughout the state. Their matches in Tampa and Miami are legendary, and Funk himself cites a 90 minute match with Brisco here in Jacksonville as one of the most notable of his four and a half year NWA World Heavyweight title reign.

I dare say WCW won't provide a 90 minute title match this month in Jacksonville. You'll be lucky if there's 90 minutes of in-ring action at Greed, and of that action, it would be foolish to expect even half of that to be work that doesn't directly insult the viewer's intelligence. That's not the way the game is anymore. The quaint southern territories – Georgia, Florida, Continental, Mid-Atlantic – are long since dead, memorialized in elliptical conversations and on staticy fourth-generation videotapes. And as the territories went, so did their brand of wrestling.

As has happened so many times in our nation's history, the increased sophistication in media technology eclipsed more primitive ideas about presentation in favor of sleeker, better financed, more corporate models. One by one, the homely little territories of the once-prominent National Wrestling Alliance found themselves in the mid-1980s superceded and eliminated by the Connecticut Based World Wrestling Federation. Funk and Brisco were NWA footnotes at this

point, and the then-current standard-bearer was perhaps the greatest professional wrestler of his time: Ric Flair. What Dory Funk, Jr. was to the 1970s, Ric Flair was to the 1980s: a compelling athlete who had the rare gift of having high-end matches with no-talent stiff in any ring in the world.

Like Funk, Flair worked matches here often in the beginning of the 1980s. But as the decade wore on, the underfinanced Florida territory found itself losing its best workers to the WWF or the Crockett family's Mid-Atlantic territory in the Carolinas. Predictably, the territory was absorbed by Crockett before being shut down altogether. And with that shutdown, in Jacksonville, Florida as in so many places, the distinct pleasure of regular professional wrestling cards came to a close. All the old territorial towns went from being cherished wives to castoff flings, serviced when it was convenient for WWF and what eventually came of the old Crockett territory, World Championship Wrestling.

Despite the death of Florida and his old NWA, Ric Flair soldiered on as the standard bearer of American professional wrestling. In stark contrast to the barely competent Hulk Hogan, his WWF counterpart, Flair continued to deliver the goods in the ring, having high-end matches that feature routinely on Best Matches of the 1980s compilations. Despite the way his character was portrayed – as a cowardly heel, holding the championship gold by dint of cheating rather than by being a better wrestler than his chief backstage rival Dusty Rhodes – Flair was the drawing-card of the promotion. Even as his character “showed ass” in matches with unremarkable midcard talent, Ric Flair lived up to his billing as the soundest professional wrestler in the entire world.

And Ric Flair made stars. Sting? Lex Luger? Both those men were made by matches which involved Ric Flair guiding them through the paces of working a wrestling match at the high-end of the artform. Sting's 1988 45 minute draw with Flair signalled Sting's selection as one of the standard-bearers in World Championship Wrestling in the 1990s. Matches approaching the quality of their early matches with Flair were rare for either man in his career, as both men were performers more attuned to cultivating an engaging look and showmanship than to living up to the great tradition of NWA champions.

WCW has spent most of the last ten years locked in a history-negating, almost evil, cycle vis a vis Ric Flair. The promotion would showcase him as weak and bury him, then push another worker to the top slot in the company. Business would suffer, and the hardcore fans would tune out. Desperate, the company would then turn to Ric Flair – offering him one more run at the top – and Flair through some ineffable talent and charisma that transcends professional wrestling – would re-enter the promotion and save the day somehow. Once the company regained solid ground, Flair would again be jettisoned, and a nation would mourn a wrestling company's willful incompetence.

Throughout the 1990s, WCW predictably concentrated most of its efforts into approximating the style and co-opting the stars of the 1980s WWF that so thoroughly decimated the old territories, the corpses of which WCW sprang from like an addled hatchling. By the middle of the decade, watching WCW was like watching a WWF 1980s reunion tour. Hulk Hogan was positioned as

the superman up top, invincible to any assault despite his age and the ravages of Vitamin S. WWF midcarder and Hogan crony Brutus Beefcake found himself showcased in a position that belied his marginal talent or drawing ability. And so on, and it was unwatchable, the visual equivalent of the Holocaust stripmalls of the new South's Atlantas, Orlandos, and Jacksonvilles.

It's perhaps inevitable that this trend would find Ric Flair displaced. Despite the wishes of hardcore wrestling fans, Flair has been reduced to a joke time and again throughout the Hogan era. Flair has played WCW president gone bad, and then committed to a mental asylum once before; currently he is cast as the evil CEO of the company, positioned deliberately to take the fall in the eyes of the casual fan when the new owners take control and their new boy is pushed to the moon over the greatest practitioner of the art of professional wrestling in our time. In a city where Starbucks pop up like polyps even as cultural landmarks close without real mention or lingering sadness, it is perhaps fitting that we will be treated to the ritual abasement of yet one more old-school cultural token.

THE HEROES OF WRESTLING PAY-PER-VIEW- 10/10/1999- CASINO MAGIC- MISSISSIPPI (PART TWO)

(DEAN RASMUSSEN)

TWENTY FOUR HOURS LATER AND AFTER WATCHING THE BALLS TO THE MOTHERFUCKING WALL SUGAR/ NAGASHIMA vs DEVIL/ OZAKI tag match...) Ah, that's better. It was gonna turn into a pathetic, analytical beating of old guys who obviously know that they can barely remember when their prime was- so I'm glad I took a day off this tape to get my bearings. Volkoff is really old and must be brittle because he tries to bump a little and seems concerned about breaking something- which is kinda sad and makes me WANT this match to be better. Cousin Luke takes a weird bump flying sideways into the corner- which would be the highlight of the match. Ah, I can't get mad at this match. These guys are fucking 60 years old. This match was about as good as you would expect from four guys who were never great workers in their primes who are now in their 60s and wrestling in a match.

Stan Lane vs. Tully Blanchard:

HEY! Tully! Tully looks all trim and in shape. Stan Lane has this hair that looks he bleached a JFK hairpiece off the album cover of NEW TRADITIONALISTS by DE-vO. Tully wrestles face and Lane cheats in an Old School way. Tully goes all 1982 highflying early with the hiptoss and the dropkick on the kneeling Lane- after Lane hits a weirdly stiff-looking Lariat. They take it to the floor and Tully does the heel spot of taking the Atomic Drop into the corner post. They cut away from a toprope axe handle and begin this really weird production thing of cutting away from a good little Old School Southern match to show these close-ups of the most plain and disinterested women in all of Mississippi. Stan Lane hits a nice Reverse Neck-breaker and gets a Cobra Clutch in after Tully- who always threw great punches- lands one. Lane oversells it just like Arn Anderson would have. Lane with a Hotshot and the Memphis Middle Rope Jump n Sit that leads to a Russian Leg Sweep for two. Tully punches back to transition and sends Lane to

the floor. Lane flies into the rail and stumbles a bit as Tully procures the Figure Four on the floor until Lane rakes the eyes to escape. Lane crawls back into the ring and Tully procures the Sleeper hold that Lane escapes by driving Tully's face into the bottom turnbuckle. Lane on offense goes for a piledriver but Tully powers out. Lane hits on a Vertical Suplex and they do the Double Pin Of Irritation with TULLY~! getting his shoulder up. FUCK THE WORLD. This was good. Except the ending. But FUCK THE WORLD. That ending sucked in a 1983 kinda way which is a good thing considering. Tully fucking ruled back in the day and he had enough in the tank in 1999 to have the best match on this PPV. Lane looked perfectly fine in this also. WOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!

Phil Schneider called me and said that he heard in the chatroom that- prematch- Tully Blanchard CUTZ A PROMO~! that I need to hear. So I will now go back and listen to it. WAIT HERE. Okay. Tully says the only reason you were a world champion, Stan Lane, is because you were Bobby Eaton's partner... and then it gets all great as he talks about ten years of hatred coming to the surface- hatred for Dusty Rhodes, for Jim Herd, for everybody who signs the contracts for WWF and WCW, for anybody who screwed him. He must a king-sized preacher these days because it's no longer a WRESTLING PROMO~! and sounds more like the old days when a wrestler would emulate the diction of a preacher. I'll take "intense" over "funny" or "extreme" anyway when it comes to wrestling. That was the beauty of the Four Horsemen and Dusty Rhodes and that whole ilk of wrestling oratory. The reason you need to fear wrestlers that want to go into politics is because the only people who give a shit about oratory skills anymore are preachers and pro wrestlers.

Abdullah the Butcher vs. One Man Gang:

Hmmmm. Abdullah is good if he's in Puerto Rico and it's 1979. Twenty years later, he's in with One Man Gang who I can honestly say I've never been a fan of. He looked great in that SPWF calendar and he WILL bleed like a fucking stuck pig so if this was in Roberto Clemente stadium it would have a promise of at least being a repulsive bloodbath. It aint' so it ain't. Abdullah has a distinct possibility of tripping over his own gigantic rack. OMG kinda chokes Abby a while with a chain. Abby starts spewing blood and my heart is warmed. They take it to the floor and OMG starts posting Abby so Abby does the suddenly AWESOME bladejob and I'm beginning to love this match. OMG keeps kicking him in the scar tissue and it's becoming a one-half Dory Funk in All Japan in 1979 blade job. Abby goes on offense and the forks comes into play. Abby begins enjoying the sweet taste of his own delicious blood to distract the audience from OMG ripping his own forehead open. Jesus, this is two fat guys with a lot of blood to give and this whole thing becomes REALLY repulsively GREAT. Kids in the audience are in shock. Hell, I was in shock when I was ten and saw BlackJack Mulligan piledrive Mr. Wrestling Tim Woods on the concrete and Mr Wrestling's white mask became completely red, blood spewing out of my heroes head- as my other hero had a smirk of hatred painted on his face after trying to kill young Tim Woods. It's a hard world, kids. Sometimes people die. Sometimes people just bleed a whole fucking boatload. This delivered as much blood as it would have in Puerto Rico which is all ANYONE could ask of this match. They blow plasma all the way to the back and I join the throng in appreciation of two over the hill guys delivering the only goods they can deliver and delivering it in spades. MILLION JILLION STARS.

Bob Orton vs. Jimmy Snuka:

HEY! Both of these guys were world class great wrestlers at one time. Jimmy is all jiggly in this. I remember when I was eleven and lived in Arkansas. My best friend Oscar was telling me about the last night's Texas wrestling- because it came on kinda late and sometimes I would fall asleep before it came on. He was telling me about this really great wrestler they had named Jimmy Snooka. He was from FEE JEE! He said he jumped really high off the corner and landed on his opponent (my guess, Al Madril). I was interested of course- what with Ox Baker killing guys with the heart punch and non-Von Erich good guys being so scarce at the time. I will NEVER forget the next Saturday night when I first saw the Super Fly splash. Snuka instantly replaced Rocky Johnson as my favorite wrestler ever to wrestle in Texas. It was a great time to be eleven. And I'm 34 now. Bob Orton Jr is even older than Snuka. This match is fine though. They start with a bunch of roll-ups. Orton hits a fucking GREAT High Vertical Suplex as Jimmy is still not afraid to bump. Orton starts driving his knee into Snuka's back and adds insult to injury hitting a backdrop for two. Orton concentrates on the arm with an armbar with a twist and knee to the elbow joint. Orton works up to the shoulder and starts reigning down blows to keep Snuka from getting to his vertical base. It's fucking brilliant. Orton does really big swings and lays the punch in while Snuka sells it like he was an all-time great twenty years prior. Orton goes to a keylock. Snuka reaches the ropes and Orton starts punching him in the face and starts jawing with the rubes at ringside. Man, Orton needs to run a five week seminar for up-and-coming wrestlers on how to throw a punch because his punches motherfucking rule. Snuka goes on offense by hitting a headbutt and Orton tries to get back with a headlock but gets shot into the ropes and they both collide- with Orton landing on top for a two count. Snuka kicks out and goes up for the Super Fly Splash but Orton blocks him and crotches him on the ringpost to set up his Superplex. Snuka holds onto the ropes to block. Orton rolls through the ropes and goes to take a swing at Lou Albano which allows Snuka to hit a flying cross-body off the top for the pin. This was every match I ever saw with Dick Murdoch in it from 1976 to 1983. Okay, why did this PPV supposedly suck?

Jim Neidhart vs. Jake Roberts:

Oh yeah, this is why this PPV sucks. Jake is absolutely tanked- as it appears he couldn't go one whole day without drinking a fifth of grain and rambles at length about...something. Jim The Anvil Neidhart comes in and he really sucks but doesn't seem to be pathetically drunk, so there you go. Jake Roberts is fucking PAISTED as he wanders to the ring, puts Damien in the ring and wanders to the back. Jake wanders back without a shirt on, looking for all the world like a COPS special guest. He picks out a lucky middle aged woman from Mississippi to rub his nipples. Jake looks like he about to summon the earl as he locks up. Poor Niedhart. They lock up again and Niedhart has to try to do SOMETHING. After a while, Jake pulls Damien out of his bag and pretends it's his dick! Ah Jake, you classy classy pathetic drunk. It really doesn't get more pathetic than this. This is Dexter Manley sleeping on Houston streetgrates-level pathetic. Jake and Niedhart flop around as Bundy comes out- I guess to make sure the spiders attacking Jake don't get out of hand. It's two on one for a while until Yokozuna shows up to make it all the more pathetic and creepy. Bundy is sober, Neidhart is the "worker" of the match, Yokozuna is obviously too morbidly obese to ever be anywhere near a ring and Jake is having another lost

weekend. I guess the hero of this wrestling match is King Kong Bundy. At least Bundy is the one who goes over in this gut-wrenchingly hideous match.

I dunno. Drug addiction is a disease and all, so I feel for Jake in that sense. I gotta wonder what the fuckheads who put this PPV together were thinking when they let him get on the stick and then get in the ring. If I were everyone else involved, I would be pissed because this wouldn't have been a bad PPV if not for the embarrassment of the great Art of Professional Wrestling that was the main event. Shit, if Phil Mushnick really wanted to stop wrestling in its tracks, he would distribute tapes of the Main Event of this PPV and the Mass Transit incident to every major media outlet. I'm gonna watch some New Zoo Review and try to remember the good times of the undercard.

[illegible]

!There's no turning back now - I'm under attack now- I see the skies are open
And I hear the word spoken - SINGLES GOING STEADY You only perceive
what you believe - You need only believe to believe - What do you know? - What do you know?

[illegible]

The Hit Squad vs. The Haas Brothers - Jeresy All Pro Wrestling - Sometime during the year 2000

(Phil Rippa)

This is one of those good yet annoying tag matches. The annoying part is the fact that this is a handheld from Jersey All Pro with no commentary which means I have no fucking way of telling Monster and Mafia apart and even less of a chance of telling Russ and Charlie apart. Fuck, the lighting was so bad at times that I had a hard time telling the Haases apart from the Hit Squad. Anyway, the Hit Squad are another in a batch of really big guys who are as agile as shit. (Another member of that club – Dirty Don Montoya is dieting his way out of that club). Case in point, one of the brothers, again I have no idea if it was Monster or Mafia, shit I couldn't tell them apart at the Super 8 and they were sitting three feet from me, hits the great this-is-the-first-time-I-have-ever-done-this plancha. Meanwhile, I have yet to figure out the Haas Brothers. One minute they look like this really promising up and coming team that has the look that they good be stars some day. The next minute they look like they should be challenging Totally Buff to a "Whose Testicles Will Shrink First?" Match. They kinda hit both ends of the spectrum as one of them does the world's greatest Octopus Hold and they do the best looking version of the Wassup spot I have seen yet. But they also threw some horrible strikes (I am still on the fence on what bothers me more of bad striking – showing more daylight than an Alaskan sunset or doing the really bad Rockish windup). The biggest blot on their permanent record is the heavy dose of Van Damesqe fruity embellishments before some of their moves. Jesus, ya don't have to tumble before every move. The match is good but it is almost one long Hit Squad beat down until the inevitable flash pin for the Mafia boys. I also dug the fact that in the land of Jersey Garbage wrestling, the match ended on a roll-up.

Ric Flair vs. Koko B. Ware – Late 1985 (Schneider)

Koko is basically remembered as the shuffling Stephen Fetchit characture he was in the WWF, but before Vince hired him to Minstrel himself, he was a pretty good regional worker in the

Memphis territory. This is the biggest match of his career as he was wrestling Flair for the NWA title in front of a rabid Mid-South Coliseum crowd. Dusty is working as Koko's second which is one of his few Memphis appearances. Flair's forays into Memphis were also pretty rare as the Memphis boys were usually going after the AWA world title. Unlike most Memphis matches this was basically unclipped and they showed almost all of this twenty minute match. Basically this was a classic 80's Flair match, he goes into a territory and makes the regional babyface look deadly. The story that the announcers were getting over was that Flair thought Koko was a push over, so every time Koko hit some offense Flair would sell the surprise. Flair does two Flair flops off of Koko's punches early and each near fall has tons of heat, as the crowd actually buys into Koko winning the belt. Flair spends a good portion of the match working on Koko's arm, which is a weird twist on the usual legcentric Flair offense. This is a Memphis match, so Koko's offense was mostly punches and Flair responded with some really stiff chops, including one that hit Koko in the face. They did the figure four reversal spot, and they had Koko place on the figure four on Flair. They did some hot near falls with Koko using his dropkick as the big highspot. Bill Dundee runs in and attacks the ref to keep Koko's from winning the belt and they have a big brawl with Dusty and Koko v. Flair and Dundee. This was just a classic example of a Ric Flair match, formulaic, but the formula works so well. Memphis is such a fun promotion to watch and it is a shame Koko was turned into such a joke in his later career.

Dean gave me this Best of World Class tape to index. The video quality is really ass poor, which is a shame because some the stuff is really good. Anyway, I wanted to highlight a few things from the tape. Actual dates be damned! (Rippa)

Chris Adams vs. Gino Hernandez

World Class was all over the place with its angles. Some were really tasteless and bad (like the Fritz Von Erich fakes a heart attack angle) but others were really good - the break up of the Dynamic Duo was one of them. The saga all started when Adams and Hernandez start to have disagreements after a tag match. The next week Hernandez shows up solo and yammers on starting to bury Adams. Adams shows up claiming that Hernandez told him the wrong time to meet the limo. Hernandez, in classic cowardly heel mode, back peddles sucking up to Adams. Well, the finally come to blows and the crowd decides that Adams is the face. So it all culminates in this match. It is an unofficial hair vs. hair match as Hernandez has busted at the Freebird's Hair Removal Cream (which Marc Lawrence puts over as not having been seen in awhile. God, Lawrence was such the fucking man at getting the angles over.) Cool little match as the Sportatorium crowd freaks out over everything that Adams does. The funny part about that is that since Adams still wrestles as a hell but because he is against Hernandez, the crowd loves him. Anyway, Hernandez even does a fall-away elbow off the top, which of course misses. Adams hits the superkick but Hernandez flops out of the ring and grabs the cream. (You remember the angle yet?) Bam! Right into Adams eyes the "cream" goes and Adams freaks out. The real subtleties of this angle come out here as Rick Hazzard whips off his shirt, exposing his man-boobs, and tries to clear the crap out of Adams face. Adams sells it about as bad as if he was shot. Crowd is stunned; Hernandez is now Public Enemy #1. This is all followed up with the great video package of Adams leaving his house with both his eyes bandaged - the story being

that he had to go back to London for treatment and that his career was most likely over. God, that was how that is supposed to work. Not some “Hey, I just fell from 30,000 feet but I am still going to wrestle in the main event tonight” crap. Of course, this is all followed up on the tape by the unfortunate news of Gino’s death. The oddest thing is during the one news report; they interview Bill Mercer (the other announcer who wasn’t Marc Lawrence). And Mercer drops the motherfucking hammer on Hernandez, basically calling him a prick during the story. Aaahhhh, WCCW. Remember they have Class in their name.

Midnight Express vs. Rock & Roll Express

This is 2 out of 3 falls. I don’t know how many people have actually seen this match but if it isn’t a lot, then this instantly becomes one of the lost great match of the Express feud. This is the Condry version of the Express and two things stand out. How outstandingly great Bobby Eaton was and how much I am realizing that I like Condry better than Lane. Oh and how weird it is to see Eaton wearing the singlet. The idea behind the match is that the winner of this match gets a shot at the Fantastics for the held up American Tag Titles. What is so amazing about the Express vs. Express feud was how they could work basically the same match over and over and still make them stupendously great. Hell, they run the same match in all three falls – Early advantage for the Rollers, Midnights gain advantage (Morton plays Morton in Falls 1 & 3, while Gibson does the honors in the second fall), hot tag, finish comes from some sort of double team move (double dropkick give R&R first fall; Morton leaps over Eaton into an outstandingly vicious lariat from Condry to tie things at two; Midnights hit double team clothesline two get deciding fall). As per usual, it was the little things that made the match different. For instance, Morton decides to crash into the ring post instead of the turnbuckle while Eaton/Condry stretch the fuck out of our Rod Stewart wannabe. The only real flaw to the match that it is a little too short as each fall is only 5 minutes in length. They were given a 30 minute time limit but I guess TV constraints cut the match down (gotta get the Von Erich Pizza Hut ads in).

Midnight Express vs. The Fantastics

This match is for the held up America Tag Titles. (Which is a set of belts that someone really needs to do the Title History on.) I have come to realize that I am the Bobby Fulton of the DVDVR as in I basically let the big boys do all the work whilst I try not to fuck anything up or injure myself. Tommy Rogers is so motherfucking great, the fact that he wasn’t a major star in the business is really a sad testimony on the business. This match is really entertaining. It is amazingly fast paced as there is hardly a break in the action. Eaton, the bumping machine, continues to show off as he takes a hip toss to the hardwood floor and a backdrop over the top rope. Condry really was a much better wrestler than Stan Lane. He sold like a mofo, which I had completely forgotten about, and he delivers an even more wicked clothesline than he did in the last match providing us with enough reason to believe that the stiffness he brought wasn’t just a fluke thing. I also dug the double underhook suplex that he busted out on Rogers as well. The good Texans are freaking out for the entire match which adds tremendously to the actual psychology of the match. The wrestlers know what is at stake and the crowd has fired them up to the point that the frenetic pace is boarding on out-of-control and when they hit that point, mistakes will be made and the match will be lost. That point comes when Eaton just obliterates Rick Hazzard from behind with a knee. This leads to Cornette interference but Rick Manning,

another of the WCCW refing corp, comes out and snitches. That means Fantastics win by DQ but the belts stay vacant. I really could have lived without the overbooked ending but I really was digging the match. Plus, this ensured another go around between the two squads.

Now, immediately after this match on the tape, is the world's greatest Brusier Brody promo which I decided I need to transcribe. Anyhoo, this transcription is as good as the real thing as you need to see the crazed look in Brody's eye as he shakes the barb wire he is carrying and moos at Terry Gordy. This is joined in progress so who knows how much was at the beginning: "Terry Gordy, you big, fat heifer you! You want a Backstreet Match? Well you got one. Texas Barb Wire match. That's right, big mouth. That's right, you big stinking heifer. Those ropes around the ring are going to be wrapped in barb wire. TEXAS BARB WIRE! TEXAS BARB WIRE! And I am going to take that carcass of yours, Freebird Terry Gordy, and I'm gonna drag it along that wire. And it is going to rip some big, nasty holes in your hide. You done shot your mouth off for the last time about Brusier Brody. You done took that big size 14 Cowboy boot off and smashed old Brody in the head for the last time. You put your name on that contract and you're stuck. You're stuck, just like a big, fat cow out in the pasture. There won't be nowhere to go. There'll be barb wire in every corner, on every rope, and there'll be you and Brusier Brody in that ring. And I am going to drag your heiney over that thing. And I'm gonna drag your back over that wire and I am going to drag your chest over this wire. And I am going to drag that big, fat, ugly puss over this wire and when you walk down that street - ain't nobody gonna ask what happened to you. Everybody is gonna know that that is the man that Brusier Brody drug over the barb wire in Texas Stadium. And you know what? When I'm in that ring in Texas Stadium inside this barb wire with you Terry Gordy and I start hearing those people shoot BRODY!!! BRODY!!! I'm not gonna even hear it. Only thing I wanna hear is, I wanna hear them going, MMMMOOOOOOOOOO!!!! MMMMMOOOOOOOOO!!!!!! Cuz your nothing but an old, stinkin cow. And your finally gonna get what is coming to you. So you get ready Gordy. Welcome to the real Badstreet! Brusier's Badstreet! And believe me, it's the worst place to have to make your money. The very worst."

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NEXT WEEK: OVERKILL!!! GAEA! TORUYPON! BAT-BAT! THAT NECW SHOW THAT RIPPA HAS BEEN PROMISING! MAYBE PETE AND NAIMARK!

THE DEATH VALLEY PLAYBOYS.

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I remember the year I went to camp
I heard about some lady named Selma and some blacks
Somebody put their fingers in the President's ears
It wasn't too much later they came out with Johnson's wax
I remember the book depository where they crowned the king of Cuba

That's all I can think of , but I'm sure there's something else
Way down inside me I can hear it coming back
Purple toupee will show the way when summer brings you down
Purple toupee and gold lame will turn your brain around
Chinese people were fighting in the park
We tried to help them fight, but no one appreciated that
Martin X was mad when they outlawed bell bottoms
Ten years later, they were sharing the same cell
I shouted out, "Free the Expo '67"
Till they stepped on my hair, and they told me I was fat
Now I'm very big, I'm a big important man
And the only thing that's different is underneath my hat
Purple toupee is here to stay after the hair has gone away
The purple brigade is marching from the grave

- They Might Be Giants